

Community Archives Center Tacoma Community House Oral History Interviews Transcript

Villalobos, Martin. Interview date 04/27/2022.

- dindria: 00:00 And let me press play and he's gonna press play. Okay. Go ahead.
- Martin Villalobos: 00:06 Hello, my name is Martin and, spell my name. Uh, M A R T I N. And uh, we are at Tacoma Community House and today is, uh, April 27th, 2022.
- dindria: 00:27 Alright, Martin, where are you from? Where is your home country? Tell us about it.
- Martin Villalobos: 00:34 I am, uh, from Mexico. Yes. I came, uh, to the United States in 1993. Yes, I was, uh, 15 years old when I first came. And, uh, instead of, uh, going to school, uh, I went to work as a roofer.
- dindria: 00:59 Oh, wow.
- Martin Villalobos: 01:00 Yes. And, uh, back in 2018, I got injured. So, uh, right now, uh, I'm not working and, uh, just, uh, I'm not able to work right now. So that's why I'm studying, uh, English.
- dindria: 01:21 Right.
- Martin Villalobos: 01:22 TCH
- dindria: 01:23 It's like your second job now,
- Martin Villalobos: 01:25 Right? <laugh>? Correct.
- dindria: 01:28 Um, what part of Mexico are you from?
- Martin Villalobos: 01:31 I am, uh, from, uh, Jalisco State. Yes. It's a small town, big, big village. Uh, there's, uh, 2200, uh, people, the lipsters.
- dindria: 01:53 Okay, so everybody knew each other,
- Martin Villalobos: 01:56 Right? <laugh>? Yes.
- dindria: 01:59 Um, who is your family? Describe them.

- Martin Villalobos: [02:07](#) Uh, my father, um, he is from Mexico also. Um, he's, uh, 70 years old. And, uh, my mom, uh, she's from Mexico too, she's 70 years old. Um, my family, well, always, um, hardworking family. Yeah. And, uh, um, well, actually they are, my family is so, uh, nice, nice people. I like to work. And, uh, um, my, my grandpa, my mom's, uh, father, uh, he was, uh, he was, uh, charro, you know, uh, he used to wear, uh, was a big, uh, Mexican hats. Oh yeah. Yes. Uh,
- dindria: [03:15](#) Was he a, uh, cowboy?
- Martin Villalobos: [03:18](#) And, yes. Oh, cow. Cow. Cowboy. Cowboy,
- dindria: [03:21](#) Yes. Charro.
- Martin Villalobos: [03:23](#) Charro, yes. So that's, uh, that's my family. I have, um, uh, a lot of relatives, uh, in the US yeah. Some of them, uh, lived in California and others in Texas and Virginia also.
- dindria: [03:45](#) Okay. Yes. Oh, you have family everywhere?
- Martin Villalobos: [03:48](#) Yes. And, uh, here in Washington I have, uh, an uncle and, uh, my sister and nephews. Nieces and nephews. <laugh>, yes.
- dindria: [04:01](#) Excellent. Yes. Are they little ones or are they teenagers?
- Martin Villalobos: [04:07](#) Um, two of them are teenagers and, uh, two of them actually, they're twins. They're twins. And they are, uh, 10 years old.
- dindria: [04:19](#) Oh yeah. Almost teens.
- Martin Villalobos: [04:21](#) <laugh>, yeah. Almost. Yes.
- dindria: [04:23](#) That's fun. Um, how did you come to Tacoma? Like, why are you not in Virginia or Texas or California?
- Martin Villalobos: [04:35](#) Um, well, first, uh, you know, I crossed the border, the US border. Then I got, uh, to California, to Santana, California. Then, uh, I lived there for, uh, for five months. I start working, um, and landscaping.
- dindria: [04:59](#) Yeah.

- Martin Villalobos: [05:00](#) So then, uh, I got laid off and that's, uh, that's when, when I called my uncle, and that's when I came here. So yeah, I came here by train. Long trip. Yes. It take me, uh, 24 hours, I think. Mm-hmm.
- dindria: [05:26](#) <affirmative>. Yes. Was it a nice trip on the train?
- Martin Villalobos: [05:27](#) Yes. Yes, it was. Uh, because, uh, I was excited, uh, because that was the first time that I was, uh, that I was riding a train and <laugh>, I didn't know how to speak a of English though, so I was just communicating just by, by hands or by <laugh>
- dindria: [05:51](#) Hand gestures right?
- Martin Villalobos: [05:52](#) Yes. Hand gestures.
- dindria: [05:53](#) Did there, were there people that spoke Spanish too?
- Martin Villalobos: [05:57](#) Um, well, um, just in in California, after we got out of California, uh, no. They were only, uh, English speaking people.
- dindria: [06:18](#) Yes. Our country, we have so many languages, but we act as though one language only right?
- Martin Villalobos: [06:23](#) Right.
- dindria: [06:25](#) Um, and so we need to do better at being bilingual. I think <laugh> [inaudible]. Um, what did you think the United States would be like when you first came?
- Martin Villalobos: [06:45](#) Uh, I thought that I, that I was, uh, going to be, uh, well, like, like, like it was, you know, because I'm down in Mexico, people that come up here then goes down there, they describe the USA like, uh, like, uh, the country of the dreams, you know? Like, uh, um, I knew that the, the, there was gonna be more opportunities, you know, uh, working wise or school. But, uh, uh, that's how I, that's how I thought the United States was gonna be like.
- dindria: [07:46](#) Yes. Land of dreams. Right? Where you can fulfill your dreams.
- Martin Villalobos: [07:49](#) Yes.

- dindria: [07:50](#) Do you feel this is an extra question, so you don't have to answer. Okay. Do you feel that your dreams, you're gonna make your dreams here,
- Martin Villalobos: [08:04](#) Yes, si. If I keep, uh, on working.
- dindria: [08:07](#) Okay right on.
- Martin Villalobos: [08:07](#) Yes. Yes. Um, because, uh, up here, uh, we have, uh, many opportunities, you know, to work, to learn to, uh, to live a better life. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, you know, uh, but sometimes it's like, it's like, uh, we get stuck or, uh, how do I say this? Because I, you end up, uh, getting married and have kids, then, uh, your kids don't wanna go, uh, to Mexico to live with you down there. And then, uh, you end up, uh, like, uh, getting used, getting used to live here. You know, it's, uh, I don't know. Sometimes it's hard because, uh, you have a family here and then you have family down there and, and sometimes, uh, you can keep going, uh, back and forth, you know? Right. Visiting
- dindria: [09:31](#) And it's hard to, to feel that when you have family in more than one place, how do you stay together? Right.
- Martin Villalobos: [09:40](#) Right. It's like you have to, uh, your heart is, you know, has to be in a different places, you know, same time.
- dindria: [09:51](#) I love, that was a good statement. Yes. I think I'm going to use that on my bumper sticker. Your heart sometimes have to be in two places.
- Martin Villalobos: [10:00](#) Right?
- dindria: [10:01](#) I'll put it on my car. <laugh>. <laugh>.
- Martin Villalobos: [10:04](#) Yes.
- dindria: [10:05](#) <laugh>. Um, okay. That was some really good, thank you so much for that. Um, now I have some fun questions.
- Martin Villalobos: [10:13](#) Okay.
- dindria: [10:13](#) What is your favorite food?
- Martin Villalobos: [10:16](#) My favorite food? Um, seafood.

- dindria: [10:25](#) Oh, yes. That's very popular. Yes. Crab, lobster, shrimp dish. Yes.
- Martin Villalobos: [10:32](#) Okay. Yes.
- dindria: [10:33](#) You like, do you like salmon?
- Martin Villalobos: [10:35](#) I do.
- dindria: [10:36](#) Oh yeah. Salmon is our favorite up here.
- Martin Villalobos: [10:38](#) Yes. <laugh>. Oh yes.
- dindria: [10:41](#) Um, what is your favorite music or song?
- Martin Villalobos: [10:46](#) I like all music. I like, uh, classic rock and roll. Yeah. Yes. Uh, one of my favorite songs is. I can see clearly,
- dindria: [11:02](#) <sung> I can see clearly now the rain is gone.
- Martin Villalobos: [11:04](#) You gonna sing, gone <laugh>, <laugh>. I dunno how to sing.
- dindria: [11:10](#) That is a really good song. I
- Martin Villalobos: [11:12](#) Love it. Yes.
- dindria: [11:13](#) Um, I can see all the obstacles in my way.
- Martin Villalobos: [11:18](#) Yes.
- dindria: [11:19](#) Um, what do you hope for your future, Martin? And this is the last question. So what do you hope will happen in the future for you?
- Martin Villalobos: [11:29](#) I hope, uh, I hope that this, uh, war ends and I hope that, um, I learned how to speak better English and I hope, uh, to study and, uh, to get a better job. And
- dindria: [11:59](#) What kind of job do you want?
- Martin Villalobos: [12:01](#) Mm, I want to, uh, you know, I, I worked on roofing for many years, so that was, uh, that was my, you know, I love, uh, I love that job, but, um, since, uh, my buckets not a good to lift up, uh, heavy things, uh, I have to learn how to,

uh, work with, uh, my brain instead of my back. Uh, but I wanna be, um, some like custom service representative.

- dindria: [12:50](#) Oh, Okay. Right why not?
- Martin Villalobos: [12:51](#) Yes. I have a vocational counselor, so he is helping me on that, so. Okay. Uh, I think I did qualify for, uh, for retraining. Yes.
- dindria: [13:05](#) Excellent. So that you can have a job where either you're on the phone or you're helping customers in the store.
- Martin Villalobos: [13:11](#) Yes. Yeah. Yes.
- dindria: [13:12](#) Okay. You could teach them how to do the roofing, just not do the roofing for them. Right, right. Yeah. <laugh> <laugh>.
- Martin Villalobos: [13:19](#) Yes.
- dindria: [13:20](#) Um, thank you so much, Martine. That's, that's my last question.
- Martin Villalobos: [13:23](#) Thank you.